In the **Claim and Focus** category, you have achieved a rating of **Advanced**.

You can continue to improve your writing by carefully considering and improving the claim and focus of your essay:

1. Ensure that your claim is clear, arguable, and precise, and that it thoroughly addresses the questions presented in the writing prompt. Consider revising your claim to make it more interesting to your audience.
2. A strong essay should maintain focus on the purpose and task, and fully support and develop the claim. Fairly and fully addressing counterclaims can strengthen your overall argument.

**Adding Interest to your Claim**

Review your answers from the entry ticket. Write your claim below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

Ask yourself a few more questions to make your claim even stronger, and revise your claim again if necessary:

* **Is my claim interesting?** Does the claim move beyond turning a question into a statement, by adding specificity and perhaps a unique viewpoint? Will others want to read more about what I have to say?
* **Is my claim part of an attention-grabbing introduction?** In other words, would this essay be interesting to others who are not reading it as a school assignment?
* **Does my claim express my unique point of view?**

**Integrating Counterarguments**

**Counterarguments** strengthen your argument by explaining why other points of view are not as strong as yours. By including counterarguments that present and disprove opposing points of view, you show that you fully understand your topic and can defend your position.

A counterargument has two parts:

* The first part states the counterclaim. The counterclaim is the objection or opposing stance others may take.
* The second part disproves that counterclaim with evidence and reasoning.

Counterarguments can be integrated throughout your essay.

1. Ask yourself: **Is there only one counterargument that needs addressing? Could a reader realistically have issues with many of the points you make?**

Consider integrating the counterargument within the overall claim or within individual reasons where you have addressed particular issues with which others may disagree.

1. Use transition words to clearly acknowledge and disprove counterclaims. For example

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Acknowledge the Counterclaim** | **Disprove the Counterclaim** |
| * “Although…”
* “Despite...”
* “While…”
* “Some argue...”
 | * “However…”
* “Contrarily…”
* “On the other hand…”
* “Evidence shows that…”
 |

Now, revise your essay to improve its claim and focus.

**Vocabulary Supports**

**Argument**—an attempt to persuade or convince others to accept an opinion or position on an issue

**Claim**—an arguable position on an issue

**Counterclaim**—a different position on an issue that opposes the writer’s claim

**Evidence**—details such as facts, statistics, or quotations that support the writer’s claim

**Focus**—the set of related ideas used by a writer to support an argument; an argument that lacks focus, presents unrelated ideas, or goes off topic

**Prompt**—the information and instructions students are responding to when writing an argument

**Reason**—a statement explaining why a writer takes a particular position in an argument
**Reasoning**—an explanation of how a reason and its supporting evidence connect to the claim